

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 PA-02 ISO-00 CIAE-00
PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 SP-02 SS-15
ACDA-12 HA-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 INRE-00 SSO-00 MCT-02
SSM-05 /111 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:DP
APPROVED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND
PA/PRESS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/IAI - MR. KORN
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. MARTHINSEN
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM
-----109303 272325Z /70

O 272157Z JUL 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
JCS WASHDC 0000
NSC WASHDC 0000
CIA WASHDC 0000
DOD
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
USICA
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS POUCH

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD; TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - JULY 27, 1978

1. DO YOU HAVE ANY REACTION TO THE EGYPTIAN DECISION TO ASK
THE ISRAELI COMMUNICATION UNIT TO LEAVE CAIRO?

A. WE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED THAT THIS STEP NOT BE TAKEN
BECAUSE OF THE INTERPRETATION THAT MAY BE PLACED ON IT.
I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IT IS GOING TO BE USEFUL FOR ME TO
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CHARACTERIZE EVERY DEVELOPMENT THAT TAKES PLACE BETWEEN
NOW AND THE TIME THE SECRETARY LEAVES FOR THE MIDDLE EAST.
OUR OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE IS TO CONTINUE THE PEACE NEGOTIA-
TIONS AND TO BRING THEM AS SOON AS IS REALISTICALLY POSSIBLE
TO A POSITIVE CONCLUSION.

HAVING SAID THAT, OUR FOCUS IN THE NEXT WEEK WILL BE ON HOW
TO MAKE THE NEGOTIATIONS SUCCEED. I HOPE YOU WILL UNDER-
STAND THAT I AM NOT GOING TO BE IN A POSITION TO-GET INTO
THE DETAILS.

Q. WHAT INTERPRETATION MIGHT BE PUT ON THIS THAT YOU
PREF-R NOT BE PUT ON IT?

A. I AM NOT GOING TO GET INTO THE INTERPRETATIONS THAT
OTHERS MAY PLACE ON THIS PARTICULAR DEVELOPMENT, AND
I AM NOT GOING TO BE IN A POSITION OF PUTTING AN INTER-
PRETATION ON IT.

Q. DO YOU STILL ANTICIPATE THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTERS
WILL MEET ON SCHEDULE SOMETIME THE WEEK AFTER NEXT SOME-
PLACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

A. YES.

Q. DO YOU HAVE A PLACE SPECIFIED YET?

A. ALL THIS IS STILL BEING WORKED OUT. AS SOON AS WE CAN GIVE YOU DETAILS ON WHO IS GOING THERE AND AT WHAT TIME, WE WILL GET IT TO YOU.

Q. THE SECRETARY DOES INTEND TO LEAVE ON SCHEDULE THEN?

A. YES.

Q. YOUR ANTICIPATION OF THIS MEETING, HAVE YOU SINCE THE UNCLASSIFIED

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING YESTERDAY IN CAIRO, HAD ANY FURTHER WORD FROM THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT THAT TTENDS TO CONFIRM THEIR POSITION, OR ARE YOU GOING BASICALLY ON WHAT HAD BEEN SAID PRIOR TO THAT TIME?

A. I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE LAST 24 HOURS. OUR POSITION REMAINS THAT WE EXPECT THESE MEETINGS TO TAKE PLACE.

Q. YOU SAID THAT YOUR FOCUS DURING THE NEXT WEEK WILL BE ON HOW TO MAKE THE NEGOTIATIONS SUCCEED. WHAT WILL MAKE THE NEGOTIATIONS SUCCEED?

A. I AM NOT PREPARED TO GIVE YOU A DETAILED SCENARIO FOR SUCCESS. I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO DO THAT.

Q. WHEN YOU SAY PUBLICLY YOU ARE GOING TO FOCUS ON IT, I AM CURIOUS TO KNOW WHAT YOU ARE FOCUSING ON.

A. AMBASSADOR ATHERTON IS OUT IN THE AREA NOW LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR THESE MEETINGS, AND I THINK THAT WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT ONCE THE PARTIES SIT DOWN AND START DEALING DIRECTLY WITH EACH OTHER THAT WE CAN MOVE THIS PROCESS ALONG. BUT I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO GIVE YOU A MEASURING STICK AS TO WHAT WOULD CONSTITUTE SUCCESS OR FAILURE.

Q. WELL, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THE EGYPTIAN NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL OR FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL SAID THAT EGYPT WOULD BE INTERESTED IN RESUMING FACE-TO-FACE TALKS, DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS ONLY, IF ISRAEL MADE SOME CONCESSIONS.

A. I DON'T WANT TO BE IN A POSITION OF CHARACTERIZING STATEMENTS MADE BY ANY OF THE PARTIES OR ACTIONS THAT THEY UNCLASSIFIED

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ARE TAKING AT THIS POINT. I THINK THAT I WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT WE BELIEVE THAT PRESENT OBSTACLES CAN BE OVERCOME. WE ARE FIRMLY CONVINCED THAT THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE PROGRESS IN THE PEACE PROCESS IS THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS. WE ARE COMMITTED TO DOING EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO SEE THAT THESE TALKS TAKE PLACE.

WE RECOGNIZE THAT MAJOR DIFFERENCES REMAIN TO BE OVERCOME. BUT THIS IS, IN OUR VIEW, ALL THE MORE REASON FOR CONTINUING THE DISCUSSIONS THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE LEEDS CASTLE TALKS. THIS IS ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS THAT AMBASSADOR ATHERTON IS OUT IN THE MIDDLE EAST NOW.

WE BELIEVE THAT BOTH THE EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI GOVERNMENTS SHARE WITH US AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEED TO KEEP THE NEGOTIATIONS GOING. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE EFFORTS OF AMBASSADOR ATHERTON AND THE UPCOMING VISIT OF SECRETARY VANCE WILL BE USEFUL IN MOVING THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS FORWARD.

LET ME GO BACK TO TRY TO SAVE MYSELF SOME HEAT OR DIFFICULTY -- I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO GET INTO DETAILED CHARACTERIZATIONS OF THIS MOVE OR THAT STATEMENT, OR WHATEVER.

Q. NOW YOU ARE SAYING THAT YOU ARE SURE THAT THE MEETING BETWEEN THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF ISRAEL, EGYPT AND THE UNITED STATES IS GOING TO TAKE PLACE IN AUGUST. AM I RIGHT?

A. NO. I AM SAYING EXACTLY WHAT HAS BEEN SAID OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF WEEKS HERE. WE EXPECT THESE MEETINGS TO TAKE PLACE.

Q. WAS THE PRESENCE OF THE ISRAELI COMMUNICATIONS UNIT IN ALEXANDRIA HELPFUL IN COMMUNICATING BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL?

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A. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT COMMUNICATIONS WERE PASSED THROUGH THAT UNIT. THAT IS A FACTUAL QUESTION, AND THAT IS A FACTUAL RESPONSE.

Q. WOULD IT BE THE OBVIOUS COROLLARY THAT THE REMOVAL OF THE UNIT IS UNHELPFUL TO COMMUNICATING BETWEEN ISRAEL AND

EGYPT, AND WHY YOU ARE RELUCTANT TO SAY SO?

A. NO. I UNDERSTAND THAT LOGICAL CONNECTION YOU MAKE THERE. I AM NOT GOING TO BE IN A POSITION TO SAY THAT.

Q. WHY IS THAT?

A. I AM JUST NOT GOING TO BE IN A POSITION TO DETAIL OR CHARACTERIZE THE IMPLICATIONS OF EVERY LITTLE MOVE WHICH IS MADE PRIOR TO THESE UPCOMING TALKS.

Q. THIS IS A LITTLE MOVE; IT IS NOT A BIG MOVE?

A. NO.

Q. WAS THE STATE DEPARTMENT TAKEN BY SURPRISE BY THIS DECISION TO EXPEL THE ISRAELI MILITARY DELEGATION?

A. I HAVE NOTHING ON THAT.

Q. THE COMMANDER OF THE UNIT, UPON ARRIVAL IN ISRAEL, SAID HE WAS SURE THAT HE WOULD BE SOON RETURNING TO EGYPT. DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION TO SUPPORT THIS HOPE?

A. NO.

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Q. SOME PEOPLE ARE SAYING THAT THIS HAS BECOME A PATTERN. WHENEVER THERE APPEARS TO BE A SIGN OF PROGRESS, THE EGYPTIANS ARE EITHER RECALLING THEIR DELEGATION FROM JERUSALEM OR EXPELLING AN ISRAELI DELEGATION FROM CAIRO. WOULD YOU CARE TO COMMENT ON THIS?

A. NO, I DON'T CARE TO COMMENT ON WHAT SOME PEOPLE ARE SAYING. WHAT I SAY FROM HERE IS WHAT WE BELIEVE AND HOW WE SEE IT. I AM NOT PREPARED TO COMMENT ON THAT.

Q. TOM, WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE THAT GIVEN THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SADAT DIPLOMACY THAT HE IS SUBTLY TELLING THE UNITED STATES THAT, "YOU ARE INSULTING ME BY THINGS THAT YOU HAVE BEEN SAYING DURING THE LAST FEW DAYS. I SAID GOLDBERG WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR SUFFERING, AND YOU GIVE HIM A FREEDOM MEDAL. I SAY THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT IS INTRANSIGENT AND I WON'T MEET WITH THEM, AND THEN YOU SAY THAT YOU APPRECIATE THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS." THIS WAS SAID YESTERDAY. WHAT KIND OF A DEAL IS THIS?

A. IT IS GOING TO BE DIFFICULT FOR ME TO EXPLAIN WHAT KIND OF A DEAL THIS IS. WE WOULD CERTAINLY HOPE THAT PRESIDENT SADAT DOES NOT FEEL INSULTED. WE DON'T THINK HE DOES.

AS FOR THE MEDAL OF FREEDOM WHICH WAS GIVEN TO MR. JUSTICE GOLDBERG, WE MAKE THESE DECISIONS ON OUR OWN. THE JUSTICE DESERVED THE MEDAL, AND THAT WAS THE REASON WHY HE WAS GIVEN THE MEDAL. IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ANYTHING OTHER THAN HIS LONG AND VERY DISTINGUISHED CAREER OF SERVICE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

Q. BUT THE TIMING.

A. I CAN'T DEAL WITH THAT.

Q. THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE SO-CALLED MCGOVERN AMENDMENT THAT A FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT WHICH WAS ADOPTED LAST UNCLASSIFIED

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YEAR AND WHICH, AS I RECALL, ENABLED THE PLO REPRESENTATIVE TO COME TO WASHINGTON AND ESTABLISH AN OFFICE HERE. THE SENATE YESTERDAY PASSED AN AMENDMENT OR PASSED THE REPEAL OF THE AMENDMENT. AND I WONDER WHETHER OR NOT THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS SUPPORTING THE REPEAL?

A. I WILL TAKE THAT QUESTION.

CHRISTOPHER

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